

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL TORONTO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6804
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMCONSUL QUEBEC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECON, PINT, CA
SUBJ: ONTARIO PREMIER ON SUN LIFE MOVE AND NATIONAL UNITY

REF: TORONTO 71

1. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESS FOLLOWING HIS FIRST PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AFTER RETURNING FROM A THREE WEEK U.S. VACATION, ONTARIO PREMIER WILLIAM DAVIS TOLD THE PRESS THAT WHILE HE REGRETS THE CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE PROPOSED SUN LIFE MOVE IT IS THE PEROGATIVE OF COMPANIES LIKE SUN LIFE TO MAKE DECISIONS AS TO LOCATION. "I HAVE HAD DISCUSSIONS IN THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS WITH SOME PEOPLE IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND THE SISTER PROVINCE OF QUEBEC. I HAVE MADE IT CLEAR TO THEM THAT, WHATEVER DECISION THEY MAKE, ITS THEIR RESPONSIBILITY. WE WON'T AS A GOVERNMENT SOLICIT OR DISCOURAGE IN ANYWAY A COMPANY TO MOVE OUT OF ANY OF OUR SISTER PROVINCES, AND AT THIS MOMENT PARTICULARLY THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC." HE COMMENTED THAT SUN LIFE'S ACTION, HOWEVER, WOULD DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD ON A NATIONAL SCALE.

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2. DAVIS CONTINUED THAT WHILE ONTARIO'S POLICY IS NOT TO TRY TO PERSUADE BUSINESSES TO MOVE FROM OTHER PROVINCES, ONTARIO AT THE SAME TIME WILL COMPETE WITH QUEBEC OR ANY OTHER PROVINCE TO ATTRACT A NEW BUSINESS.

3. DAVIS DID NOT MENTION SUN LIFE SITUATION IN HIS

ADDRESS TO THE REXDALE INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION. HOWEVER HE DID TELL THE BUSSINESSMEN THAT HE THOUGHT ECONOMIC MALAISE WAS AT THE ROOT OF MANY OF THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING CONFEDERATION. HIS STATEMENTS REFLECTED THE OUTLINE OF PRIORITIES CONTAINED IN PREMIER DAVIS' RECENT NEWSLETTER TO VOTERS ON HIS OWN DISTRICT OF BRAMPTON. UNDER THE HEADING "UNITY DEBATE", THE PREMIER TOLD HIS CONSTITUENTS: "OUR FIRST PRIORITY, WITHOUT QUESTION, MUST BE TO DEAL WITH THE ECONOMIC ISSUES WHICH CONFRONT US. THE ECONOMY AND NATIONAL UNITY ARE INSEPARABLY LINKED. THE RESTORATION OF OUR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY MUST BE THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCERN OF ALL GOVERNMENTS, CORPORATIONS, UNIONS AND CITIZENS IN THIS COUNTRY. SECONDLY, I FEEL WE SHOULD IMMEDIATELY REFORM THE PRACTISES OF OUR CHOSEN FORM OF GOVERNMENT. IN PARTICULAR, I BELIEVE WE MUST ATTEMPT TO DISENTANGLE FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES. OUR THIRD PRIORITY MUST BE TO RECONSIDER THE CONSTITUTION. WE HAVE HAD ENDLESS DISCUSSIONS OVER MANY YEARS OF CONSTI-TUTIONAL REFORM, AND WE HAVE LITTLE TO SHOW FOR ALL THAT EFFORT. IT IS TIME TO HAVE A NEW CONSTITUTION".
DIGGINS

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